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HUMAN EVENTS
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The Reagan Campaign

Carter Under Bipartisan Assault for 'Stealth' Leak

EXCERPT

The leak, in and of itself, suggested Scowcroft, was not so critical. But by stressing the program was "doable" and "was of the highest importance," said Scowcroft, the U.S. made it far easier for the Soviets to secure our technology or combat it. There are hundreds of Soviet intelligence analysts trying to track down thousands of leads; he said, so when some information is confirmed, these analysts can then begin concentrating their efforts on what they know to be important.

"It's possible that Brezhnev knew of the program before," he said, "but if he didn't he certainly does now. And what he knows is that it is an important U.S. program." This information is of "enormous significance to them [the Soviets] in their allocation of resources."

Scowcroft also bluntly rejected President Carter's statement that the Stealth project had not even been classified by the Ford Administration. "What I can say," said Scowcroft, "... is that at a critical milestone of the program in 1976, it was not only top secret but had additional restrictive access as well."

Ray Cline, a former CIA official, who appeared with Scowcroft at the National Press Club, said he was upset by the "cavalier disregard" for the security classification involved. "This technology was under intensive study in the CIA and other agencies 15 years ago when I was deputy director of the CIA," said Cline. "It was then given the highest classification possible, with elaborate controls of distribution of information."

Cline said that from his long years of experience he has "no doubt that one of the greatest benefits they [the Soviets] can have is confirmation by officials of the Administration that the program is alive and is considered a technological breakthrough and is of high priority." Whenever the Soviets can turn up something on the progress of

some technological breakthrough, he said, this gives an opportunity for their agents "to crawl a little further into the recesses of our secrets." The Soviets, added Cline, have invested "enormous" sums of money and manpower in trying to penetrate our technology, and in "helping the Soviet Union—the KGB, the GRU—discover more about this technology, we have done serious harm to our national security...."

The most lethal blast, however, may have come from retired Adm. Elmo Zumwalt, a long-time Democrat and former chief of naval operations. In a letter to Rear Adm. William Thompson, which was obtained by Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.), Zumwalt personally accused President Carter of leaking the information about the "Stealth" technological advance.

Said Zumwalt:

"There appears to be no doubt, based on my contacts with White House staff and Pentagon officials, that the decision was made by the President to disclose the existence of this technology, and that the method chosen was first to 'leak' its existence and then be forced to confirm the leak.

"I have been told by my sources that the decision was a political one designed to diffuse criticism of the President for his decision to cancel the B-1 strategic bomber. The political theory was to establish retroactively a justification for the earlier cancellation, i.e., it can now be asserted that the B-1 was cancelled in order to await the development of Stealth technology.

"The decision to disclose this technology, even if it had been done in response to an inadvertent rather than a deliberate leak, was, in my judgment, unbelievably harmful to the national security. The fact that our government has confirmed at the highest levels the existence and feasibility of the technology, gives the Soviet Union at least a five-year head start in reacting to it, in

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comparison to the timing of their reaction had they had to develop the knowledge of its existence and the certainty of its feasibility through their own means.

"I have found no one to whom I have talked within the national security system who disagrees with this view."

The networks gave the Zumwalt letter a bit of a ride, but whether it will make the pages of our most prestigious mass-circulation weeklies is uncertain. What does seem certain, however, is that a large portion of the U.S. defense and intelligence community believes with Ronald Reagan that President Carter is, in fact, playing politics with our national security.